

State Technical Committee Meeting

1/26/2016
9:30am – 11:30pm
The Nature Conservancy
22 Bridge Street, 4th Floor
Concord, NH 03301

Meeting Called By: **Kim McCracken, NH NRCS** Type of meeting: **State Technical Committee**
Facilitator: **Kim McCracken, NH NRCS** Note taker: **Shari Cohen, NRCS**

Attendees:

Kim McCracken, Shari Cohen, Don Keirstead, Matt Brown, Aseeb Niazi, Emily Cashman, Karl Honkonen, Cara Cargill, Kira Jacobs, Wendy Weisiger, Tim Fleury, Matt Flanders, John Hodsdon, George Hamilton, Mark Koprowski, Bruce Cilley, Dan Canniff, Marilyn Milne, Roger Simmons, Jennifer Gornnert, Steve Walker, Lionel Chute, Linda Grames, Pam Gilbert, Vicky Stafford, John Hodsdon, Andrew Madison

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item: **Welcome, Introductions, and Partner Updates**

Kim McCracken, State Soil Scientist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Members Updates

Kim McCracken, NRCS: began the meeting at 9:36 AM

Apologies for Rick missing due to illness; he will be participating in the next session.

States purpose: sharing updates and discuss partnerships and priorities

George Hamilton, UNH CE, Food & Agriculture: We have a program through sustainable research and education, a 6 person team training on cover crops, along w NRCS and CDs; the goal is for this training to come back to NH w an educational plan.

Jennifer Gornnert, NH DAMF:

- Agriculture Nutrient Management (ANM) grant applications are due March 1st; \$2500 maximum per applicant
- Natural Resource and Biodiversity requirement of the USDA NOP; Final Guidance document, NOP 5020, has been published and is effective as of 1/15/16. Certified organic producers may be reaching out to NRCS for technical assistance in implementing practices to meet this requirement
- Organic Trade Association is working on the concept of "certifying producers in transition". Current supply of certified organic commodities, especially organic feed, cannot meet the demand. Looking for ways to encourage producers to transition, this is one initiative. Again, NRCS may be called upon to assist with producers in transition.
- Fertilizer Bill HB 1514 relative to limiting nitrogen and phosphorus in waterways by limiting N and P content in fertilizer products sold at retail. Working group formed to address problems with how the bill is written. Should this apply only to homeowners (intent of the bill) or to anyone applying commercial fertilizer to lawns?

Vicky Strafford, RCCD & Strafford CCD: We provided the local community input to NRCS, we are working on WRP projects (now WRE), as well as a RCPP project for outreach to farmers to get them signed up - training on Nutrient Management Plans is in the works.

Aseeb Niazi, Congresswoman Kuster's office: I am new here and listening to take your information back to the Congresswoman.

Lionel Chute, Sullivan CCD: We are exploring bio nutrient farming and will provide a workshop - Sullivan county farm in Unity is managing a grant for future uses of the county farm w an ag value-added emphasis.

Cara Cargill, NH Ag Mediation Program: Mediator for NH mediation program funded by USDA for mediation services

Pam Gilbert, GCCD: We are working on a plantsale and riparian buffer workshop w NRCS and The CT River partnership.

Emily Cashman, Senator Shaheen's Office: Omnibus funding for Land & Water Conservation Fund through 2018 and NRCS conservation operations – Awaiting final rule for NLEB and would like to check in w folks here for your feedback.

Wendy Weisiger, SPNH: Our land grant dept. has applied for easements at Emery Farm and Powder Major Farm. We just completed the last WHIP for prescribed burning, we'd like to request that funding for prescribed burning be re-opened.

John Hodsdon, BCCD: We've maintained level funding and can continue w various projects.

Karl Honkonen, USFS: FS based in Durham – working on grants for on-going landscape scale projects in private forestry consistent w state forest action plan - we also have a program lead by CE, Drinking Water Quality Improvement Partnership w NRCS, and an erosion/weather based focus. We are working w US F & W service in MA and NH for riparian forest buffers with the Merrimack Watershed Council. We are also participating in the LIS RCPP.

Linda Grames, FSA: Introduces Bruce Cilley, new SED, FSA

Bruce Cilley, SED, FSA: It is my pleasure to be here. I just started a few weeks ago and I am looking forward to working w all of you.

Matt Flanders, Senator Ayotte's Office: The Senator attended the Farm and Forest Expo.

Dan Caniff, Congressman Guinta's Office: I am here to listen.

Steve Walker, Office of Energy and Planning, Conservation Land Stewardship: We monitor easements and projects and let people know about what you all offer.

Andrew Madison, Granite State Water Assoc.

Dorn Cox, GreenStart and NHACD: GreenStart is currently involved in directing the launch of a Soil Renaissance Initiative <http://soilrenaissance.org/about-soil-renaissance/>

Kira Jacobs, Drinking Water Branch at EPA in Boston: Serving on the Technical Steering Committee of the Long Island Sound/CT River RCPP. I am also serving on the Land Conservation and Forestry subcommittee - is the project contact for source water protection (protecting drinking water supplies), which is one of the key goals of the project. The LIS RCPP's land conservation subcommittee will be using the Healthy Forest Reserve Program for easements in priority areas in the watershed. I am coordinating with the state drinking water programs in NH and the other states so that the "source protection areas" located in the CT River watershed can be made available to landowners via GIS.

Kim McCracken made the following NRCS announcements: new roles for NRCS – Don Keirstead is now the State Resource Conservationist (our lead scientist) and Shari Cohen is Business Services Specialist.

Agenda Item: **USDA Two-Chiefs Drinking Water Quality Improvement Partnership** Presenter: **Roger Simmons, USFS**
**Roger's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Roger Simmons, USFS, WMNF: 4 - 5 million dollars will eventually go into this project - we are bringing many partners together to address this drinking water/landscape issue. FS has flat appropriations. We will offer timber for sale and are hoping to ramp that up - a lot of work is going into trail partnerships w volunteer groups and partners - we have 1200 miles of foot trails, and lots of snowmobile trails, but we need to make improvements on these. We are making improvements in the riparian zone in Thornton.

Mark Koprowski, RD: Beverly Mason is now Area Office Director for Greg MacPherson - she will attend these meetings going forward. The Health Care Sector is heating up and our funding is increasing. Value Added Producer Program and Rural Energy for America Program have had a banner year. (Brochures for Value Added and REAP programs were available for handout)

Linda Grames, FSA: We work only w farmers and we make farm storage facility loans - the categories for which we can now make these loans has opened up.

Agenda Item: **The Conservation Reserve Program, Overview, Updates & Recommendations** Presenter: **Marilyn Milne, FSA**

**Marilyn's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Marilyn Milne, FSA: I am required to reach out to the State Technical Committee for recommendations:

- I need feedback for the primary nesting seasons: no comment will result in the same nesting season period.
- Lionel asks the question; is 6/1st too late a date?
- Roger Simmons comments; you should be talking w NH F & G.
- Wendy Weisiger comments; your dates do not match what F & G recommends.
- Marilyn will go to F & G
- Feedback requested re: Maintenance Rates for Continuous sign up practices - per acre maintenance rates - table was presented - Are you willing to recommend that the flat rate be lower: The response is NO
(Fact sheets were made available as handouts)

Kim McCracken reads a statement forwarded from **Tom Thomson:**

'I would like to ask that all Tree Farmers and private forest and Ag landowners who have contracts with NRCS be contacted sooner than later about how the Long Eared Bat will impact any project they will be working on in 2016. This would be helpful to all so they can plan in advance. Thanks for your help on this matter. Look forward to hearing how the NRCS Tech. meeting went. Tom Thomson

Don Keirstead will stay here longer if anyone would like to discuss NLEB

Break / Resume at 10:55 AM

Agenda Item: **New Hampshire Association of Conservation Districts Updates** Presenter: **Lionel Chute, SCCD**

**Lionel's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Agenda Item: **New NRCS Soil Health Division – Vision & Priorities** Presenter: **Brandon Smith, NRCS**

**Brandon's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Kira: Can winter cover crops provide economic value? **Brandon:** yes, shorter season corn allows for planting tritcale and that can be harvested as feed.

Kira: regarding craft beers and spirits, do you envision using those crops for alcohol production in NH? **Dorn Cox:** yes, we've been doing a lot w winter rye and other crops.

Agenda Item: **Introduction to New NRCS State Conservation Engineer** Presenter: **Matt Brown, NRCS**

**Matt's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Agenda Item: **Farm Bill & NRCS Updates** Presenter: **Kim McCracken, NRCS**

**Kim's PRESENTATION - posted to webpage*

Next State Technical Committee Meeting TBA

Hearing no further questions - adjourn 11:40

